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(71) Applicant *(for all designated States except US)*: MADE2MANAGE SYSTEMS, INC. [US/US]; Suite 200, 9002 Purdue Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268 (US).

(72) Inventors; and

(75) Inventors/Applicants *(for US only)*: RUSH, Gary, W. [US/US]; 2703 Sleepy Hollow Drive, Lafayette, IN 47904 (US). KIEFUS, Herman, J. [US/US]; 338 South 26th Street, Lafayette, IN 47904 (US).

(74) Agents: WOOD, James, D. et al.; Ice Miller Donadio & Ryan, One American Square, Box 82001, Indianapolis, IN 46282 (US).

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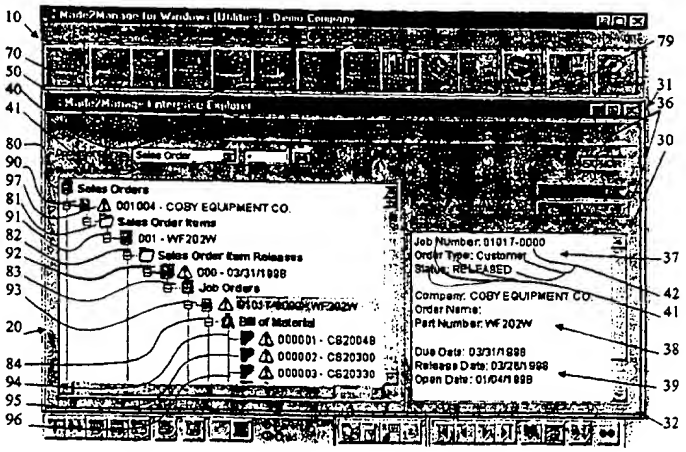

(57) Abstract

The present invention comprises a software system having a user-friendly navigational interface utilizing an hierarchical display (20) of business documents based upon a dominant-subordinate relationship between the documents. In one embodiment, the documents are related through the use of keys, which define a relationship between the dominant (81) and the subordinate documents (91). In conjunction with the selection of a specific document, the invention displays information related to that document which can be custom defined by the user. In one embodiment, each user can define a unique set of data to be displayed. The invention further provides a means by which the underlying data can be easily edited from the hierarchical display (20). The present invention also allows the creation of expressions (230, 231) that will alert the user to predetermined conditions. The alert is displayed in conjunction with the hierarchical display (20) of a document, but the expression (230, 231) may be defined by data not normally contained within the document. Each user can define a unique set of alerts for various documents. The present invention further comprises a visual rendering of predefined expressions describing the progress of work related to a document and each user can also define a unique set of progress of expressions (250) for various documents based on conditions of particular interest to the user.